

Message Text

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ACTION OES-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00 SOE-02
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 EPA-01 INR-10 IO-13 L-03
NSF-01 NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-05 ICA-11 SS-15 SP-02
DOE-15 INT-05 ACDA-12 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CG-00
DLOS-09 DOTE-00 FMC-01 TRSE-00 H-01 JUSE-00
OMB-01 PA-01 /150 W
-----036432 241328Z /43

R 241214Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5201

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SENV, TGEN, FR, US, OCON
SUBJECT: AMOCO CADIZ: NOAA CNEXO JOINT SCIENTIFIC
COMMISSION

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE SUBJECT COMMISSION MET FOR
THE FIRST TIME AT THE FRENCH BRITTANY OCEANOGRAPHIC
CENTER TO BEGIN DECISIONS ON SPENDING A \$2 MILLION
AMOCO DONATION TO STUDY THE ECOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF THE
AMOCO CADIZ OIL SPILL OFF BRITTANY ON MARCH 17, 1978.
THIS REPORT GIVES NAMES, SPECIALIZATIONS AND AFFILIA-
TIONS OF THE COMMISSION, AND SOME OF THE BROAD SUB-
TOPICS CONSIDERED. THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS BROUGHT
OUT IN THE DISCUSSION WERE: THE FRENCH SIDE IMPRESSED

THE AMERICAN COMMISSION MEMBERS AS NOT FULLY PREPARED
(BIBLIOGRAPHY NOT COMPLETED AND ALL INVOLVED INSTITUTIONS
NOT IN CONTACT); THERE WAS MUCH AMERICAN CONCERN THAT
SAMPLES TAKEN BE PROPERLY PRESERVED AND ANALYZED; AND
THE FRENCH CONCERN THAT THE FACT OF AMOCO'S DONATION
NOT LEAD TO SPECULATIONS THAT THAT FIRM WAS THEREBY
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ATTEMPTING TO PURCHASE THE CONCLUSIONS. NEXT MEETING
SET FOR OCTOBER 12-13 IN WASHINGTON. END SUMMARY.

2. THE US FRENCH COMMITTEE TO COORDINATE A STUDY OF
THE ECOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF THE AMOCO CADIZ OIL SPILL
MET FOR THE FIRST TIME ON JULY 18 AND 19, 1978 AT
THE BRITTANY OCEANOGRAPHIC CENTER (CENTRE OCEANOGRAPHIQUE

DE BRETAGNE, COB), A UNIT OF FRANCE'S NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE EXPLOITATION OF THE OCEANS (CENTRE NATIONAL POUR L'EXPLOITATION DES OCEANS, CNEXO. FRENCH CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION, WHO CHAIRED THE MEETING, WAS DR. LUCIEN LAUBIER, DIRECTOR OF COB, AND

A MARINE BIOLOGIST. AMERICAN CO-CHAIRMAN AND LEADER OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION WAS DR. WILMOT N. HESS, DIRECTOR OF NOAA'S ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH LABORATORIES, BOULDER, COLORADO. OTHER AMERICAN MEMBERS ARE DR. DOUGLAS WOLF (BIOCHEMISTRY, MARINE BIOLOGY) OF NOAA; PROF. IAN KAPLAN (MICROBIOLOGY, GEOCHEMISTRY), UCLA; PROF. JACK ANDERSON (BIOLOGY), PACIFIC NORTHWEST LABORATORIES, BATELLE INSTITUTE; AND PROF. EDWARD GILFILLAN (ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES), BOWDEN COLLEGE. THE FRENCH DELEGATION, WHICH DR. LAUBIER PRESIDED OVER, ALSO CONTAINS PROF. JEAN MARIE PERES (MARINE BIOLOGY), UNIVERSITY OF MARSEILLE; DR. LETACONNOUX, OF ISTPM, THE FRENCH INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF MARINE FISHERIES; PROF. JOSEPH BERGERARD (BIOLOGY), DIRECTOR OF THE ROSCOFF BIOLOGY STATION AND PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS; AND DR. PHILIPPE RENAULT OF THE FRENCH PETROLEUM INSTITUTE. IN ADDITION, THERE WERE OBSERVERS FROM THE EMBASSY, EPAA, AND AMOCO.

3. DR. LAUBIER INFORMED THE GROUP THAT CNEXO'S STUDY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF THE ECOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF THE OIL SPILL WAS NOW BEING COORDINATED BY THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT. FOR BUDGETARY REASONS, THAT MINISTRY HAD REJECTED SOME OF CNEXO'S PROPOSALS; WHICH MEANT THAT HE HAD SOME INTEREST IN THE COMMISSION'S AT LEAST CONSIDERING THEM. IN BROAD OUTLINE THEY WERE: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF A SELECTED AREA OF MOST SCIENTIFIC INTEREST, THE CONSIDERATION OF HEAVILY IMPACTED TIDAL AREAS, AND ANOTHER OF THE ABERS (ESTUARIES) AS WELL AS STUDIES OF HYDROCARBONS TRACES OVER A WIDE RANGE AND FINALLY A SUITABLE TOPIC IN MICROBIOLOGY.

4. DISCUSSION BROUGHT OUT THE FACT THAT A NUMBER OF RELEVANT STUDIES AND SAMPLINGS HAVE BEEN DONE AT THE ROSCOFF BIOLOGICAL STATION, WHOSE DIRECTOR IS A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION. BY WAY OF ILLUSTRATION, HE NOTED A DECREASE TO AS LITTLE AS FIVE PERCENT OF NORMAL IN OBSERVED MEMBERS OF CERTAIN SPECIES IN THE REGION FOLLOWING THE OIL SPILL.

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DOE-15 INT-05 ACDA-12 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CG-00

DLOS-09 DOTE-00 FMC-01 TRSE-00 H-01 JUSE-00

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5. THERE WAS MUCH CONSIDERATION DURING BOTH DAYS ABOUT ANALYTICAL CAPABILITIES IN BOTH THE US AND FRANCE. IN FRANCE, THERE IS GOOD CAPABILITY FOR ROUTINE ANALYSIS, BUT A LACK OF PERSONNEL. IN ADDITION, SOME INSTITUTIONS LIKE THE FRENCH PETROLEUM INSTITUTE AS A MATTER OF POLICY DO NOT DO ROUTINE ANALYSES. IT WAS NOTED THAT THE FRENCH ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION (CEA) AND THE GEOLOGICAL AND MINERAL BUREAU (BRGM), HAVE THE CAPACITY FOR FAIRLY SOPHISTICATED ANALYSIS. THERE WAS AGREEMENT IN THE COMMISSION THAT ANALYSIS WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO ITS WORK, BUT THAT THIS SORT OF SERVICE SHOULD BE CONTRACTED WITH CARE. MOST OF THE BUDGET COULD BE TAKEN UP WITH THESE SERVICES IF ALL THE PRESENT AND POTENTIAL FUTURE SAMPLES WERE SUBJECTED TO SOPHISTICATED ANALYSIS. IT WAS AGREED LATER THAT THE LIMITATION OF ANALYSES WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE BY THE DIRECTORS OF SPECIFIC PROJECTS, RATHER THAN BY THE COMMISSION IN ADVANCE.

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6. THE COMMISSION ALSO CONSIDERED SOME PROPOSALS FOR DETAILED STUDIES. NONE OF THEM, IN THE COMMISSION'S VIEW, WERE VERY GOOD, BUT SOME, IT FOUND, COULD BE ACCEPTED WITH MODIFICATIONS. SUB-COMMITTEES WERE ESTABLISHED TO GENERATE MORE AND BETTER PROPOSALS. THESE ARE TO BE IN MEMBERS HANDS BY SEPTEMBER 15 SO THAT THEY CAN BE GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OCTOBER 12-13.

7. A MORE GENERAL PROBLEM WAS THE NECESSITY OF AVOIDING DUPLICATION. CHAIRMAN LAUBIER POINTED OUT TO THE GROUP THAT SEVERAL FRENCH INSTITUTIONS WERE ALREADY AT WORK ON THE PROBLEM. HE SAID HE WILL DO HIS BEST TO KEEP IN TOUCH. BUT HIS TASK IS MADE A BIT MORE DIFFICULT BY COB'S TENSE RELATIONS WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN BRITTANY. OTHER OBSERVERS HAVE ALSO NOTED THESE TENSIONS.

8. CONCERNING RECRUITMENT OF GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS TO PERFORM VARIOUS SUB-TASKS, THE AMERICAN SIDE FAVORED, AT LEAST FOR RECRUITMENT IN THE US, A MODIFIED COMPETITIVE BIDDING SYSTEM WITH TWO OR THREE CAREFULLY SELECTED OPERATORS BEING INVITED TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS. THE FRENCH SIDE SAID THERE WERE SO FEW SPECIALISTS IN FRANCE THAT SUCH A SYSTEM WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE THERE. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE IS ONLY ONE SPECIALIST IN MICRO-PHYTOBENTHOS IN FRANCE AND SHE IS HARD AT WORK ON A JOINT PUBLICATION WITH TWO COLLEAGUES. IT WILL THUS OFTEN BE DIFFICULT TO GET PROJECTS UNDERWAY, IN THE FRENCH VIEW.

9. 9. ALSO INFLUENCING FRENCH COOPERATION WAS WHAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LAUBIER DESCRIBED AS THE POLITICAL NECESSITY OF HAVING FRANCO-AMERICAN COOPERATION IN ALL FIELDS, I.E., EVERY PROJECT WOULD HAVE TO HAVE SOME FRENCH PARTICIPATION. GIVEN THE LACK OF FRENCH SPECIALISTS IN SEVERAL SMALL FIELDS, RECRUITMENT ON THE FRENCH SIDE MAY BE TIME

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DLOS-09 DOTE-00 FMC-01 TRSE-00 H-01 JUSE-00
OMB-01 PA-01 /150 W
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CONSUMING. FOR THIS REASON SOME DELAYS MAY RESULT.
THE AMERICAN MEMBERS ON THE OTHER HAND STATED ON
SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT THE STUDY MUST GET UNDERWAY
SOON, BEFORE SOME OF THE ECOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF THE
OIL SPILL HAVE WORN OFF, OR CAN NO LONGER BE DEFINITELY
ASCRIBED TO THE OIL SPILL AS OPPOSED TO OTHER FACTORS.
IN PARTICULAR, SOME AMERICAN COMMISSION MEMBERS STATED,
WE NEED SOON TO SEE TO THE PROPER STORAGE AND COLLEC-
TION OF PRESENT AND FUTURE SAMPLES.

10. FINALLY, THE COMMISSION'S WORK HAS ITS DELICATE
ASPECTS. LAUBIER IS STILL UNWILLING TO ADMIT, OR TO
HAVE ANYONE ELSE ADMIT (AT LEAST IN FRANCE) THAT
AMOCO IS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS STUDY. GIVEN THE PRE-
VAILING INDIGNATION AT THE DAMAGE CREATED BY THE OIL
SPILL, AND NOW THE INCREASING FEELING OF BITTERNESS
AT WHAT IS PERCEIVED TO BE THE GOVERNMENT'S INDIFFERENCE,
WE SHARE LAUBIER'S VIEW THAT A WIDESPREAD DISCUSSION
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OF AMOCO'S CONTRIBUTION COULD LEAD MANY TO SUPPOSE
(HOWEVER WRONGLY) THAT THE FIRM WAS TRYING TO PURCHASE
IN ADVANCE THE RESULTS OF THE COMMISSION'S INVESTIGA-
TION.

11. IN SPITE OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS, WE REMAIN OF

THE VIEW THAT A STUDY OF THE ECOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF THE
OIL SPILL, AS OBJECTIVE AND SOPHISTICATED AS AMOCO'S
CONTRIBUTION AND THE EFFORTS OF THE USG AND GOF CAN
MAKE IT, IS WELL WORTH DOING. ANY MINOR DIFFICULTIES,
WE BELIEVE, CAN BE HANDLED BY FRANK DISCUSSION BEHIND
CLOSED DOORS.
HARTMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMMISSIONS, AMOCO CADIZ, OIL SPILLS, STUDIES, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PARIS23160
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780303-0278
Format: TEL
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780727/aaaaawup.tel
Line Count: 285
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5d31f96d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1907760
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMOCO CADIZ: NOAA CNEXO JOINT SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION
TAGS: SENV, TGEN, OCON, FR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5d31f96d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014